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In reply to Office Action mailed February 6, 2006
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REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on February 6, 2006. Claims 1, 10, 11, and 25-29 are pending in the application. With this amendment, the independent claims, i.e., claims 1, 10, and 11 are amended. Claims 25-29 are unchanged and no new claims are added.

The pending claims were rejected under 34 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bergh in view of Sumita. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims are patentably distinguishable over the rejection.

The independent claims have been amended to include the limitation that "both the predetermined conformity requirement is automatically relaxed and the predetermined number of user profiles is selectively increased for the repeating the filtering and determining steps." Applicants respectfully submit that these limitations are missing from both Bergh and Sumita.

Sumita is cited in the Office Action on page 9 as utilizing and manipulating "both a predetermined number in the return set and a threshold of similarity/predetermined conformity requirement in order to affect the return set." A number of examples of ways this feature of Sumita is implemented are disclosed throughout the reference. In particular, several examples are disclosed in the "Thirteenth Embodiment." Sumita teaches changing the threshold, the topic, or other. Sumita does not, however, teach changing more than one of these criteria at a time.

In contrast, the amended claims set forth "both the predetermined conformity requirement is automatically relaxed and the predetermined number of user profiles is selectively increased for the repeating the filtering and determining steps." These features are not shown or suggested in either Bergh or Sumita separately and thus they cannot be found in any proposed combination of the references. Applicants respectfully submit that the amended independent claims 1, 10, and 11, and the dependent claims 25-29, are patentably distinguishable from the combination of Bergh in view of Sumita.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request removal of the rejection and favorable action and allowance of the application.

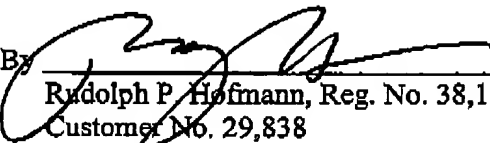
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CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all pending claims are now allowable and respectfully request that a Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that a conference would be of value in expediting the prosecution of this application, the Examiner may reach the undersigned at (612) 607-7340.

Should any additional fees be necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge or credit any such fees or overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1901 (Reference 60021-302901).

Respectfully submitted,

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